

# Africa

A black and white photograph of an African woman holding a baby. The woman is looking down at the baby with a gentle expression. She is wearing a beaded necklace and a beaded armband. The baby is looking towards the camera with a curious expression. The background is slightly blurred, showing some foliage.

WHITE SISTERS

MARCH-APRIL  
1956



## Caritas

The Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa was founded in 1869 by Cardinal Lavigerie to aid the White Fathers in Christianizing the Moslem and pagan women of Africa and through their means conquer the family and society. The Sisters cooperate with the White Fathers in all kinds of catechetical, educational, medical and social service works in 150 missions scattered over the vast African Continent. They also train the African girls for the religious life.

Though there are over 1900 White Sisters the number is far from being sufficient to cope with the present day needs of our missions. Sisters are needed to staff more catechetical classes, grammar high and normal schools, as well as more hospitals, dispensaries, baby welfare centers, leprosaria, etc.

Doctors, nurses, teachers, as well as young girls without any special training, who feel called to devote their lives to foreign missionary work, would find ample scope for their zeal among the Africans.

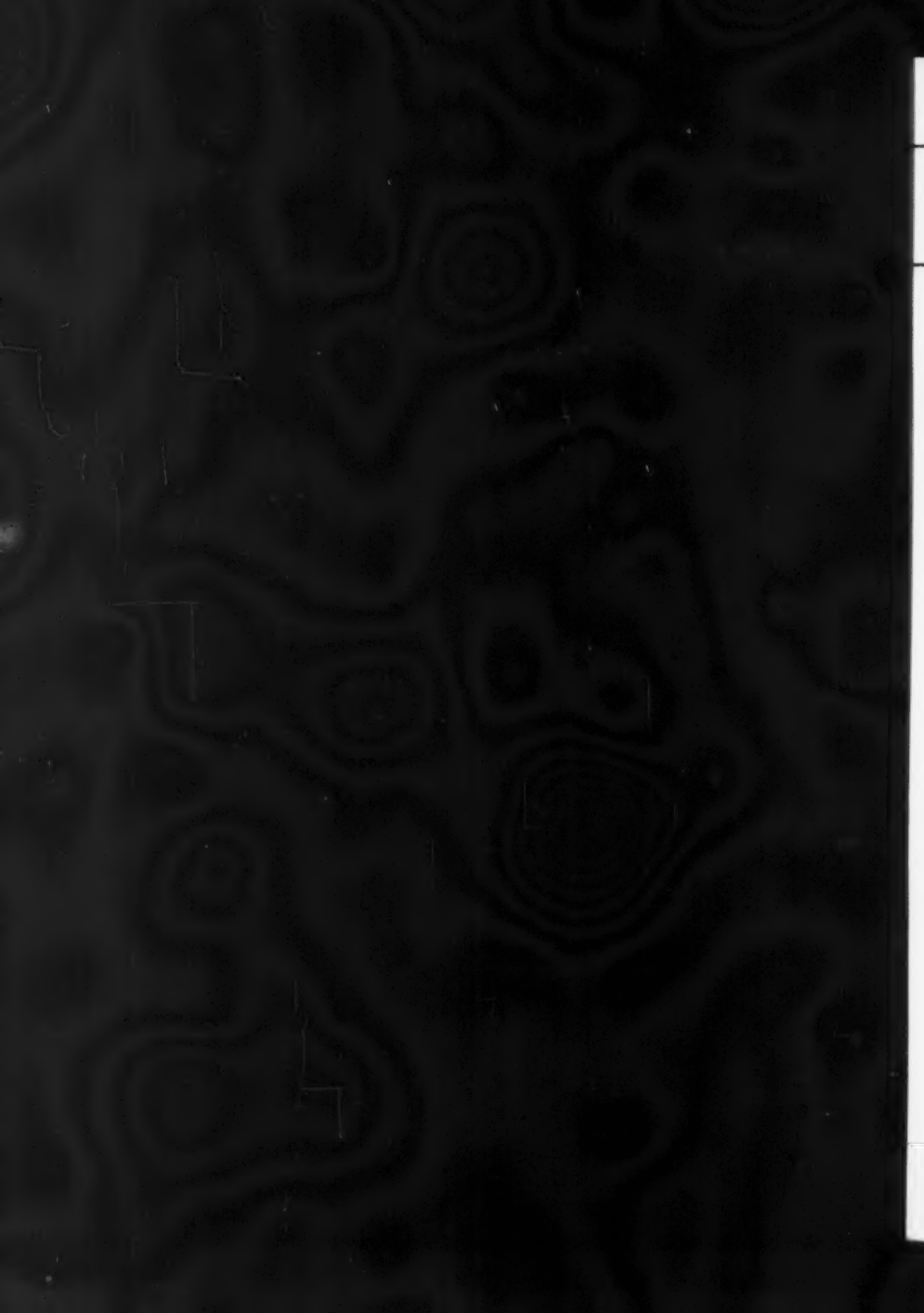
The White Sisters receive their religious training and pronounce their vows in this country before leaving for the missions.

Any young girl who would like to become a White Sister, and thus attain her personal sanctification through active work for the evangelization of Africa, may apply to:

MOTHER SUPERIOR  
WHITE SISTERS  
MARY GLENN R-D-2  
FRANKLIN, PA.

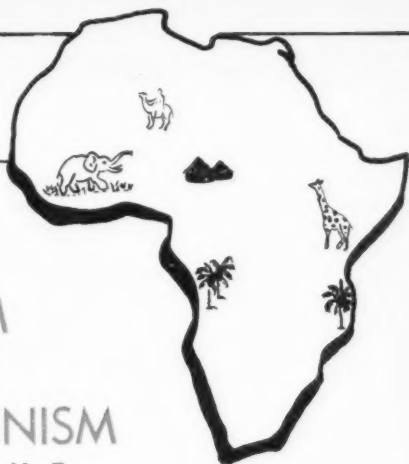
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# A NEW AFRICA

## WILL CATHOLICISM OR COMMUNISM PREVAIL?



The Catholic Church is taking a very active part in the formation of a new Africa, through the zeal and enthusiasm and hard work of a multitude of missionaries of all nationalities. Convinced that any true culture must be firmly grounded on Christian principles, they are giving the African what is best in culture while respecting his own character and the environment in which he must live. The missionaries realize too that the African is receptive to their teaching, that the grace of God prepares the way for them and produces results far beyond their calculations. Tangible proof of this is that in the territory confided to the White Fathers in Africa there are three African Bishops, almost five hundred priests and fourteen hundred African Sisters.

Christianity is already well established in Uganda. Ruanda and Urundi are witnessing mass conversions and in the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast the same spirit prevails; so that, the shortage of Missionaries makes itself felt now more than ever.

And there lies the reason for the Missionary's joy and also for his anxiety. Only too well does he know that the Communists are doing all in their power to make Africa theirs. The Missionaries know that the success or failure of their endeavors depends on the help they receive from countries to which the faith was brought centuries ago; help in prayer that wins grace, in manpower that conveys the grace, in alms that provide the necessary adjunct to grace.

# Multiple Demands On the Missionaries

The word MISSIONARY brings all kinds of thoughts to mind, but much depends whether the mind belongs to a layman or woman, a future priest or sister, a businessman—in Europe or America, or a Missionary with Missionary experience.

These few thoughts are of a Missionary Sister with varied experience of the Uganda Missions over a period of 19 years.

First of all material progress made during that time is extraordinary to say the least—in transport: planes, cars, bicycles, railway—the new “Way to the West” leading to Kilembe Mines in Toro. Mining: minerals, copper, tin, gold, wolfram,—to speak of only a few. Education: only those who have been away for a few years and come back just before or during the actual development can realize the tremendous strides taken and the progress that is being prepared by a movement of expansion unequalled in the history of Uganda.

All these things affect the Missionary whose life is so linked with that of the Christians that they can never be considered apart. The Missionary must be “all things to all men”. Nothing—no knowledge or craft—is negligible.

By this I do not mean that we do not need specialists—in whatever branch — they also are necessary; but being a specialist is, if I may say so, secondary, apart from the fact that, being a Mission-

ary is in itself to be a specialist, a fact that is often lost sight of.

On account of this development and expansion, Missionaries are forced to be “Multiplex”—they are called upon to be teachers, doctors, nurses, technicians, builders, mechanics, administrators, and yet their primary vocation, “Planting the faith”, must never be allowed to become secondary.

In spite of the very appreciable help that our European lay teachers are giving, so far they are releasing no Missionaries, but all are taken up by the expansion, and what I consider to be the most urgent need of the moment — the “follow-up” process—is so sadly lacking through want of missionaries.

We get our children through Primary, Secondary and even Post-Secondary education: through to technical, commercial and other trades and professions — to say nothing about the splendid numbers joining the Seminaries and religious congregations — but the “carry over” the “follow through” is lacking nearly everywhere. Very rarely can the Missionary Sister go out to the people, visit them in their homes, arrange help for those in need. Help to run or supervise the “Women’s Clubs” that are springing up everywhere. No longer can we expect the Christians to walk miles and miles to the Mission Station—we must go to them—but how? when all are over-



*Visits at domicile are of primary importance.*

worked in whatever branch of work they are. "Pray ye the Lord of the Harvest that He send MORE laborers into His vineyard".

The number of children are increasing rapidly—in 1953 in Primary Schools alone, both boys and girls, the increase over the 1952 enrolment figures was over 10,000, in 1954 more than 11,000, last year, 14,000.

Correspondingly greater numbers of children are in our Junior Secondary and Senior Secondary schools, but even so they cannot all go on to higher studies; many will go back to their homes in the villages or drift to the towns.

The White Sisters have only nine Convents in Uganda, but find it

more and more difficult to staff them on account of different kinds of works being continually added, or because of expansion of the existing ones and with this where are the Sisters free for Social Welfare Works? If we could have two extra Sisters in each Mission for catechetical and directly apostolic work—that would mean 18 extra Sisters—and that for Uganda alone. And for 150 Mission Posts in Africa . . . Where are they to be found? Young girls with a desire for the Missionary Life can find every outlet for their talents . . . provided they love Almighty God sufficiently to make the necessary sacrifice of all they have in order that they can receive "ALL" and the one thing necessary.



## THE CULTURE OF THE BAGANDA

By A. GOULET, W.F.

*While the Baganda people are known to be outstanding because of their general dignity, politeness and bearing, their works of culture are also worthy of mention for these products portray the people!*

Certain elementary arts have been practiced from time immemorial in Uganda. Beautiful, delicately structured baskets, produced from palm branches are proof of their art in basketry. Pottery from clay takes form in all shapes of pitchers, pots and pipes. Axes, knives and lances are skillfully forged in iron. As carpenters, their work lacks finesse for want of tools, but smaller articles such as stools and canes can be considered

as beautifully finished, when this fact is taken into account. Clothing consisted chiefly in the skins of animals for men, and of bark-cloth for women, the fabrication of which can well be enumerated among their artistic achievements. With the introduction of commerce, bright colored cotton prints are naturally tending to replace the bark cloth, though still extensively used today and fortunately maintaining the art. The construction of their homes is simple but at the same time very solid. Without the need of nails, the Baganda ingeniously wattle the interior and spread wet mud over it.

Music and dancing are inherent



in the hearts of the Baganda and the guitar, violin, flute, xylophone and drum were all invented to give expression to their love of both. Their standard of the practice of medicine was remarkably high.

In their traditions an extremely interesting culture is found. However, since it was only with the coming of the missionaries that a written language was introduced, they are of oral transmission. Historical facts, legends, stories, fables, proverbs and songs have been faithfully preserved and handed down from generation to generation.

The only source of history lies in this unwritten tradition. The members of each clan have a very superior knowledge of the important events of the past in which their ancestors played a part; all can give the names of their kings and their great deeds.

#### *Kintu, the First Man*

The realm of legends and stories holds a vast store of matter that with study gives much light about these people. For example, an attentive listener will often find a ground of historical truth in this mixture of legendary tales. From this point of view, the tradition they have kept of Kintu, the first man, is one of the most interesting, for it would seem that with only minor changes it portrays the cherished Christian history of Adam and Eve, their sin of disobedience and subsequent punishment.

According to the legend, Kintu, the first man, appeared on earth one day without knowing just

where he had come from. He found a cow there and its milk provided him with food. Not long after, the children of Ggulu, the King of heaven, having come down to earth, saw Kintu there. The daughter, Nambi, fell in love with him and told her father about it. Ggulu brought Kintu before him and said: "Take Nambi as your wife and lead her back to earth with you. Here is a hen, some millet, the stalk of a banana tree, potatoes, corn, beans and everything else that you will need. Do not forget anything when you leave. If you do, do not come back to get it for fear of meeting Walumbe (Death), who is absent at the moment. He will certainly follow his sister and, as he is bad, he will only bring harm to you."

Kintu and Nambi set off. They were already a long way off when the woman noticed that she had forgotten the hen and the millet. What was to be done? In spite of the prohibition of Ggulu they decided to go back to heaven. Unfortunately, Walumbe was there when they arrived and he came down to earth with the two travelers.

It was at Magongo that Kintu and his wife made their home. Many children were born to them and they were very happy. Then one day Walumbe said to Kintu, "Give me one of your children to cook my food for me." Kintu refused. Walumbe flew into a rage. "You will not let me have one of your children," he cried. "Very well, I shall take them all by force." From that day the children

of Kintu and Nambi fell sick and began to die, one after the other.

Terribly grieved, the father went to Ggulu and asked for help. Ggulu answered by saying that this was his punishment for his sin of disobedience. Finally, after repeated entreaties, he sent his son, Kyikuzi, with Kinto and ordered that he should bring Walumbe back to heaven.

No sooner did Walumbe see his brother than he buried himself in the earth. Kyikuzi immediately set out to catch him. Just when he was about to seize him, Kintu's children, against the very severe warning they had received, began to shout. Understanding what this meant, Walumbe again plunged into the earth.

Angry at this disobedience of the first man's children, Kyikuzi returned to heaven leaving the whole family to the fate it had brought on itself. Kintu, however, would not admit himself defeated. "I will have so many children," he said, "that Walumbe will not be able to kill them all." And so it was that Death remained on earth to punish man for his insubordination.

All music and songs among the

Baganda is essentially the accompaniment to the dance. Therefore it is rhythm and not melody that counts. In this respect it is easy to understand the relation, so much spoken of, of modern American swing, jazz or whatever you wish to call it, and the music of Africa.

The singer is usually accompanied by an eight-string guitar or a one-string violin; the flute gives a warbling effect on either a sharp or solemn tone and the indispensable drum is there to beat the time.

The Baganda have great difficulty in getting the half-tone; generally speaking they do not reach it at all. It is only with effort and patience that the missionaries have been able to teach some of their students to play the music we know.

Thus it can be seen that the Baganda have their own civilization and culture. Christianity has brought them much higher and we missionaries have been given many wonderful consolations in seeing their generosity to God. Good, practising Catholics are today legion in Uganda and there are numerous vocations for the priesthood and religious life.



#### OUR FRONT COVER

Maria thanks God that she is a Catholic, but sighs for more Missionaries to bring Christ to all her people.

## A GLIMPSE OF TRINITY COLLEGE

"Educate a man and you educate a person...but educate a woman and you educate a nation." Such is the ideal in Uganda, but as there are only three High Schools for girls there, the percentage of educated women is still very small. The White Sisters' high school, Trinity College, as it is called, on Nabbingo Hill just 9 miles from Kampala, Uganda's metropolis, has a yearly registration of about 150 girls. Here the Muganda girl is taught most of the subjects that the average American girl learns in High School...and in Eng-

lish; but it is one of the concerns of the Sisters that she also learn her language well, for she is the Catholic leader of tomorrow in her own country...the hope of her nation.

Learning the strictly academic subjects for a Muganda girl is a serious business, but the Sisters know how to add a lighter touch to the daily grind. Take Sr. Milburga for instance...she delights in sharing her knowledge of art with the girls, and after giving them initiation into technique, some guiding...and much encouragement, she succeeds in making them produce fine paintings which would amaze some of our American students.

Sister Elizabeth-Ann (formerly of Hamburg, N.Y.) likes music and had the good idea to take her violin along with her when she went to Nabbingo, so that now, the African girl can enjoy the benefits of a new culture; two of the Nabbingo girls have been learning violin for two years, and show remarkable talent.

In addition, Sister gives singing lessons to the girls. This they enjoy, for they are great lovers of music. They sing while they work, they sing while they play and even manage to hum a very rhythmic tune while studying.

Sr. Elizabeth-Ann relates some of her first experiences as a teacher of music at Trinity College. At

*They will soon be professionals.*





*Music is part of the African's life.*

a singing lesson, one day, she noticed that the voices of the girls went flat, and though she had given them the note to begin with, even after five repetitions, they always ended a whole tone off the key. She decided that the best way to train their ear was to accompany them on the piano while they sang. They started off all right but in the middle of the song, again they went flat. The disappointed glances of Sister only intimidated the girls, and even the more daring who carried on seemed to go from bad to worse. As Sister struck the last note of the song on the piano, one of the girls put her finger on the key next to Sister's and said: "Sister I think this is the note we are singing." True it was, but when Sister explained that she was following the written music it only led to a lengthy discussion about notes and the change of key . . . why did the pianist have to play

according to the written music . . . wasn't it simpler to follow the tone of the singer; and that was the end of Sister's attempts for that day. Gradually, however, as the girls became more familiar with the theory of music, the notes and keys began to mean more to them, and Sister Elizabeth-Ann was able to write in a recent letter:

"It is very amusing now, to see one or two girls at the singing lesson stop to listen whether or not someone is off the pitch. When they are in doubt, they look up to me for a reassuring nod. If I shake my finger, they know someone is off the tune and with a slight nudge, they remind one another to be on the alert. The voices are then softened . . . each one lends a sharp ear to the accompaniment and in a few moments, the singing is perfect again.

Church music is a favorite with

the girls and this encouraged Sr. Elizabeth-Ann to begin a Church Choir. Last year she was able to get 35 of the girls to join. She knows how to uphold their interest, and to make things easier for them, she duplicated copies of music for each of the members. Sister writes that it is surprising to see how quickly they pick up a piece of music when they have a copy of the notes to read from. Though most of them cannot yet read the notes, at least they know whether to go up or down, or to increase in volume or not.

The girls' interest in music goes still farther and Sister was able to start a percussion band last year. She managed to get a few tambourines, cymbals, bells, triangles and African drums. This year she hopes to train a girl to direct the band, and if possible, to add her two violinists to the group.

Such are some of the advantages given to the Muganda pupils at Trinity College, but if we had more schools . . . and more missionaries, the education of a greater percentage of African women would be possible.

## \*\*\*\*\* If Only \*\*\*\*\*

It happened in Rhodesia. An African woman was busy in her plantation when screams from her child, who had been playing nearby, brought her quickly to her side. A lion had attacked the child and stood over it, biting and mauling. The brave mother, screaming loudly, rushed to defend her child with the only weapon she had, her hoe. This, of course, brought the attack on herself.

As the valiant woman struggled in the very unequal fight, a neighbor heard her cries and taking his old muzzle-loading gun, ran to the rescue. The lion was on top of the woman, maltreating her savagely. The hunter fired point blank. As he dragged away the mother and her child, other neighbors arrived and found the lion was dead. The child died the same evening and the mother the next day. If only there had been medical aid near at hand, both might have been saved.

Africa is in dire need of doctors and nurses, of hospitals and dispensaries and of Sisters to take charge of them. Where there are missions and medical centres, they can only look after a very small proportion of the sick and disabled who need their care. Buildings, equipment, medicines, doctors, nurses, priests and sisters, all need to be multiplied a thousandfold to begin to be adequate for the tremendous amount of work awaiting them.

## IN THE KIGESI COUNTRY

*"If you want to see a crowd, a real crowd of happy and lovable people," said Bishop Lacoursiere, "come to Rubanda where I shall bless the cornerstone of a new church."*

There could be no thought of refusing such an invitation! The next Saturday, very early, we started off for Rubanda. The district of Kigesi, in Uganda, is very beautiful, with mountains towering a mile and a half, or even higher, their sides covered with innumerable villages. The Bakiga and Batchiga tribes of Kigesi are most interesting people; they are energetic and hard-working, eager to advance, wholesome people who have large families and love them,

as they also love the missionaries who bring them the long-desired word of God.

After half an hour's travelling, we began to pass groups of men, women, and children, who waved gaily at us. These were the Christians and catechumens living in villages served only by an African catechist; they manage to come to the Rubanda mission for great feast days, or perhaps every Sunday for Mass if the distance is not too great. What joy at the thought

*The Chief of Kigesi kneels during the blessing of the Corner Stone.*



of the blessing of a new church, their new church. Few of these new Christians would willingly miss such an occasion!

When we arrived at Rubanda, the ceremony had just started. Three thousand or more persons were crowding around the foundation wall of the church. Some Europeans were there also, as pious as their African co-religionists, as well as the Great Chief of Kigesi, a good Catholic, who for this solemn occasion had donned his official costume . . . a black cotton GANDOURAH with gold embroidery and the insignia of his office.

On the little hill of Rubanda, in the midst of the most beautiful scenery imaginable, with mountains on every side as far as the eye can see, thousands of fervent souls listened attentively to the prayers of their Bishop and his attending priests. We thought how wonderful it would be to be able to ask these simple, trusting souls to tell us of their joys and their hopes . . . but we had to be content to look around us, noticing, first, the volunteer catechists who are the indispensable right arm of the missionaries; then, the young men who were waiting to seal the foundation stone in cement after the Bishop had blessed it, the young mothers carrying sleepy or curious babies on their backs, the girls in bright-colored dresses and, here and there, women both old and young who still preferred the traditional cow-skin draperies covered with embroidery.

It was an interesting and fas-



*Dressed in their elegant cow-skin robes.*

cinating scene, and one not likely to be often repeated. The ceremony continued under a cloudless sky. After the opening prayers, the Bishop circled the foundation several times, sprinkling it with holy water, then recited the Litany of the Saints, to which the whole crowd responded, and finally blessed the stone. Then the group of young men approached to seal the stone in its layer of cement, the crowd watching intently, fully aware of the great honor it was for them. Bishop Lacoursiere began his Mass on a temporary altar placed in the future sanctuary. The crowd came closer, surrounding the altar, while many of the younger ones climbed up on nearby walls, and scaffolding, the better to see and hear. During Mass the Bishop talked to his flock in Rukiga, their own melodious language. He told them that the construction of the church would be finished as soon as it could be, considering the means he had at



*The women appreciate Sister's talk.*

his disposal. It would be their church, the church of the Batchiga who are scattered all over the surrounding mountains, and he invited them to participate by their prayers and their generous help in building the house of God.

After the ceremony ended, the crowd still stayed around in groups of happy, laughing people, and only gradually, as the day began to wane, did those of the more distant villages start their homeward walk. Indeed, many stayed on for the afternoon ceremony, during which His Excellency was to confirm 250 Christians.

\* \* \*

The Kigesi country, like that of the Rwenzori chain to the north, is very densely inhabited. The people, although far from a European center, are longing for progress toward civilization. We

had proof of this when Sister Andrew of the Sacred Heart, at the request of Father Superior, spoke to some of the women about the education of children, and about their duties as wives and mothers. After High Mass, about a hundred women of all ages sat in a group on the ground, listening earnestly to the words of the White Sister, as translated for them by one of the White Fathers. Their interest and understanding of the speech were shown by their smiles and nods, as well as by their laughter at some of the more "psychological" ideas! When Sister had finished, one of them, a leader in Catholic Action, spoke up to explain the practical difficulties facing them in their task: "It is easy to keep the children clean," she said, "for there is no lack of water; it is feasible to train and correct them; dressing them



properly is more difficult, for it costs money to buy new clothes often, and sometimes husbands refuse to give the money; being careful of the health of the very little ones and giving them a Christian upbringing are the most difficult of all to do. We mountain women have not been trained to do that. We have to be taught. Couldn't some White Sisters come to stay with us, as they do in other places?"

This question was repeated, in slightly different words, by the 120 catechists whom we met at the end of their monthly reunion: "Couldn't you stay here?" they queried, in the simple, direct way of the mountain people. "We would build you a house. The African Sisters we have here are taken up with catechism classes and with school, and we need White Sisters to teach our women and girls, and to nurse our sick!"

As we looked at these catechists surrounding their leader, we felt our admiration for them grow. Most of them were barefooted, and there were very young as well as very old ones; the majority

came from great distances to be at this meeting where Father Superior gave them instructions and advice. One of these catechists was stationed at Rubanda itself, and we saw him in action. He was preparing 270 catechumens for Baptism, from children to old men with white hair, and including many mothers with babies on their backs. He has been at it for 50 years: for half a century, he has been patiently, tirelessly teaching Christian doctrine to his brethren, who come to him thirsty for truth, and who give him the respect and obedience due a Chief!

He reiterated his companions' plea that we remain in the Kiges country, and we would have happily complied with the request, but, alas! obedience called us elsewhere. We could only promise, with all our hearts, our most earnest prayers. "Lord, look with favor upon the people who cry to Thee!"

Please send them, very soon, the apostolic workers for whom they pray to You so fervently and unceasingly!

Sr. MARIE-BENEDICTE, W.S.

### IN CLASS

Sister asked a little boy to make a sentence with the word notwithstanding. He thought a few seconds and replied, "My brother wore out his pants but not with standing."



*Celebrating a FEAST DAY at a mission in Urundi where there are 26,000 Catholics but only three White Fathers and four White Sisters to take care of them as well as hundreds of catechumens, who are under instruction.*





*Far away from the missions  
there are thousands of other  
Africans, such as these, pleading  
to become children of God. Pray  
therefore the Lord of the harvest  
to send more laborers to reap it.*





**MISSIONARY  
BY  
PROXY**

Just one of the many poor, sick, and lonely Africans with no one to care for her, no one to tell her there is a God who loves her and died on the cross to save her.

Would you not like to help such a poor soul? If you cannot go to take care of her yourself, you can do so by contributing toward the training of a White Sister, who will be your proxy. You would then share her prayers and the merits of her apostolic labors.

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WHITE SISTERS, 319 Middlesex Ave., Metuchen, N. J.

Dear Sisters:

Here is my contribution to help train a White Sister who will be my proxy with the poor Africans.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

CITY .....ZONE .....STATE .....



## NEWS

Another solemnity in the annals of the White Sisters at Belleville . . . seven postulants received the habit on February 11th, the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes; and two novices pronounced their first vows . . . Deo Gratias! Both the newly professed, Sr. Christopher Mary (Helen Harrison of Baltimore, Md.) and Sr. John Michael (Elizabeth Brauns of Woodstock, Ill.) left for our General Mother house in North Africa on February 17th.

\* \* \*

Four White Sisters walked into Northern Rhodesia for the first time fifty years ago. Of these four Sisters, three are still there devoting themselves to the many works that were started little by little. Their dispensary is considered the first one in Rhodesia. A great celebration with a Pontifical High Mass took place to commemorate this event, and the Africans proved their gratitude to the Sisters in many ways.

\* \* \*

Four Hundred Catechumens were baptized the same day at Mwazy,

in Tanganyika, a mission that counts 12,000 Catholics. Most of these catechumens live in far away villages but they were taken into the homes of the people while they stayed at the mission for their final instructions before baptism. Among the number were 80 young women with their babies, who also were baptized.

\* \* \*

Catholic Action was reorganized on a sound and lasting foundation in the Archdiocese of Tabora in 1953. A White Father was assigned to the full-time duty of directing the Lay Apostolate. The Director began his work concentrating on the training of a group of specially qualified laymen. Then other groups were formed.

Weekly meetings are now held under his guidance. The virtues required in leaders are elaborated upon, followed by discussions on topics such as Catholic family life, newspapers, education of the children, etc. The training course is for the present limited to men, but similar groups will be formed for educated women in the near future.

JUST ARRIVED AT

# LUBWE

*"Write something for the magazine. People at home like to hear about the Missions."*

*"But what can I write about?"*

*"The customs, mission-work, anything striking. We are here so long now that nothing strikes us any more. But you have just come. Jot down your impressions and write up an article afterwards."*

Such was the conversation between two White Sisters in Rhodesia and the one "just out", Sister George Bernard, has sent us the article. True it is that for those who have been there ten, twenty, even forty years, life in Africa has become so normal that they have forgotten they ever did things otherwise or ate other food, or saw white faces in their class and dispensary. But those arriving see many things new . . . and wonderful.

\* \* \*

The bell rings at 4:30 A.M. BENEDICAMUS DOMINO . . . and with all my heart I answer DEO GRATIAS. How good God is to give us this new day to praise and love Him and make all these Africans love Him. But wait a second . . . before getting out of bed . . . otherwise I shall be caught in the mosquito net.

Meditation, Rosary, in our little chapel into which the first light of day gradually penetrates. Then with the now rising sun, we go to church for Mass, admiring the

glistening Lake Bangweolo in its early morning freshness. The bell stops as we enter the vast rose-colored edifice, the work of a Brother and some of the men of the village, who had only the simplest tools and their own home-made bricks.

There is always a good attendance at Mass on weekdays. About forty young men in white shirts and khaki trousers are on the left; they come from the Training College. On the right are girls of all ages, many of whom are faithful to daily Mass. European dress and African costume are intermingled. Behind these representatives of the schools are respectable groups of men and women, most of the latter having babies on their backs. The little ones sleep, kick their legs, join in the singing, just as they like. We are far from the quiet peace of a convent chapel, but it is just grand to hear the whole congregation praying and singing together as they unite with the Holy Sacrifice; even going up to Communion they sing and this





*African teachers are a great help in educating their own.*

does not harm their recollection . . . rather the contrary.

After Mass, we leave for our red-brick convent with its thatched roof, before which tall palm trees mount guard. Breakfast brings us bananas for the first time today . . . but not for the last. You could not guess how many kinds of bananas there are nor in how many different ways they can be served. Green bananas are a vegetable; certain yellow ones are a fruit.

#### STUDIOUS MORNING

After breakfast there is no time to be wasted, for each Sister has plenty of work to do. My principal job at present is to learn the

language, and I begin the day with an hour and a half of study. The desire to speak as soon as possible gives zest to the work. Then, to attune my ear to the language, I go over to the school with a Sister who is going to give a catechism lesson. The 350 girls attending the school come from a great distance every day. Ten of the eleven classes are taught by African teachers and the top class by a Sister. The teachers were trained at Chilubula Training College. We cross the big playground and reach Standard One, where an English lesson is drawing to an end. Beaming smiles and a proud "Good Morning" greet us. I retire



*If there were more Missionaries there would be more smiles like these.*

to the back of the class so as to observe and hear all I can without distracting anyone.

Whether Christian or not, dark or "fair", young or old, the girls have one thing in common... their friendly smile. All too soon the drum rolls, and out of class we troop. Imagine my surprise when I pick up my sun helmet and find it full of white ants. They are ubiquitous, and more hostile than friendly. But this time they are disappointed, for a good shake deprives them of their prey.

#### **MANY HANDS MAKE LIGHT WORK**

I set off for church, where quite a lot of work awaits me, as yesterday was a big Feast day. Rather at a loss as to where to begin, I welcome the three little boys who approach with "Bamana tuleya ku kumwafwa". ("Mama, we've come to help you".) They like to work in church: rolling up the carpets... skins of antelopes killed in

the country... gathering up the faded flowers and taking down the decorations. Explanations are given with few words and many gestures and all goes well for a while. Then one of the boys, very eager to do a special job, has me puzzled. No matter how I rack my brains, I cannot make out what he wants. Finally I give in and tell him to go ahead, but after a few minutes I think it better to go and see what he is about. Nothing less than scrubbing away with plenty of water and a good hard brush the polished prie-dieus in the sanctuary. As the drum rolls again, we put the finishing touches to the tidying up and I thank my collaborators.

#### **THE BUSH**

In front of the house are two bicycles and a Sister on the lookout for my return. "Come and see the schools at Mostero and Citembo", she calls to me. Off we go. The path hardly deserves the name, for we often have to walk as it is too sandy to ride. We skirt the lake, for there the sand is more firm. Amphibious bicycles would be better, I think! As we ride along through cultivated land, bush and villages, I notice the little round houses and the women grinding the "manioc" to make BWALI, their daily food. Children run out from everywhere. They clap their hands and give a friendly bow.

We reach Mostero, and make straight for the school. There are two classes, one for the boys, the other for the girls, with stone slabs for benches and a blackboard. The

children learn to pray, to read and write, a little arithmetic. The Sisters must visit these bush schools often, to help and stimulate both pupils and teachers. We go to each class for a short examination, then mount our cycles once again.

As we pass through the next village, we see a group of men seated at the door of a hut, where there has evidently been a death. We push our way into it, where women are wailing and lamenting, as is usual here, and learn that it is Maria, wife of Dominico, who has died.

The corpse has been dressed in the best cloth she had and is exposed seated in a chair, as is the custom among the Babisi. Raising her voice above the wailing, Sister asks the women to cease crying and to pray. The response is imme-

diate and we say the Rosary for Maria. The men outside join in. Then after seeing some sick people in the village we remount our bicycles. This had been an unexpected halt and it is later than we had intended when we reach Citembo.

Class is just finishing when we arrive at the school that beats Mostero in poverty. There is not even a school-house here and class is conducted around a tree with the blackboard fixed on one of the branches. Some of the children have bits of slate, others write on the sand. But how glad they are to see us! We go to visit two pupils who are ill and then leave the "school" surrounded by all the school children plus the others of the village. Our joy in seeing their delight needs to be experienced to

*Bicycles are a time saver.*





*Sewing is a great pleasure and pastime for the little girls.*

be believed. There is no vanity in it . . . it is not personal; they love us because we are Sisters, God's sent there by Him, to make Him known and loved. Thank you, God, for letting me come here!

There are many sick people too: a woman who has just had a baby and is far from being well; an old man sitting in front of his hut; an old woman with eye trouble; a child with T.B. We go to them all, Christian or not. They are so simple and it is easy to speak to them of God. A man brings his neighbor, who wants to become a Christian, to see us.

We need more time, but it is almost noon and we must go home.

Have you realized that we have only gone through half the day? But remember it begins at 4:30! We are just in time to join the community for prayers before going to the refectory for dinner, which is still something of an advantage for me. There are sweet potatoes and of course bananas, but this time with a sauce.

#### AFTERNOON

The mid-day sun allows of little else than rest and we take ours gratefully. Rosary follows, then we return to our various occupations. I go to a sewing class and remedy the faults made by the older girls and then help the younger ones—this gives me good



*With the help of baby welfare centers, the infant mortality rate has greatly diminished.*

practice of the language. Sometimes they do not understand me, but they are very patient. After the class, I return to the sacristy to prepare the vestments for tomorrow's Mass. I send a boy to the lake for water, which he brings back on his head . . . it would be too heavy to carry any other way. Into his bucket I put the freshly gathered roses, for the lowering sky presages a storm and the torrential rain would destroy them.

#### AT THE DISPENSARY

It is again time for me to study, but today I shall have direct methods and accompany my teacher, a Sister who has been

forty-eight years here, to the dispensary. The other day a man said to her, "Sister, you speak Cibemba as we do." "No wonder," she answered, "I spoke it long before you did."

We find a crowd of women outside the dispensary, as it is the day to weigh babies. Close by is a courtyard surrounded by little huts where those who need constant attention, or come from a great distance, are lodged.

In the first hut is a woman with a badly burned baby. Next door there is another mother with her baby whose little foot is just a wide infected wound. In another

hut are Maria and her friend who have come to die with the Sisters . . . Maria of a cancer that has left her nothing but skin and bones, and her friend of a very serious eye disease. Then there is Augustino, a very devoted catechist, who is now completely blind. He welcomes a chat with us even more than the bananas we brought him.

I listen as Sister speaks to the people and feel very happy when I can put in a word or two. Our short visit is an event in the patients' long day and as we go from one to another I tell Sister what I understood or did not. Sometimes, my companion explains to me in Cibemba, which is not very enlightening, and I have to remind her of her mother tongue.

Then the church bell rings for Benediction. The congregation is quite numerous and I wonder how many churches at home have so many at a week-day Benediction. Everyone sings everything . . . and all by heart. As we leave the church, a lorry, a rare thing to be seen here, pulls up at the dispensary. We hurry over followed by the crowd that gathers round the lorry.

It brought a woman caught by a crocodile three days ago, when she went to get water from the lake. The huge, strong animal plunged her twice into the water, but she succeeded in gripping its lower jaw and struggled till she was free . . . a very rare feat. Her home is so far away that she could not be brought before today, and now the enormous wound is al-

ready gangrenous and swarming with worms. Only by means of urgent and vigorous treatment can we hope to save her. But before nightfall, she is saying she is cured, so much has the dressing relieved the pain. She will probably recover, but she has had a very narrow escape.

While Sister Infirmarian is looking after her, I sit by the lakeside and study. The still calm beauty of the scene grows upon me and I find myself murmuring the "Canticle of the Sun" instead of Cibemba idioms.

Some little girls are fishing, a rod in each hand and a basin on their heads in which to put their catch. From time to time they come back to the shore and dig in the sand for more worms. The storm that has threatened all afternoon is imminent now and I get back to the convent just in time.

It rains only as it can do in the tropics, and soon the rain comes through the chapel roof that has not been thatched for a long time. No one is perturbed. A Sister goes for some pails . . . this is the only time we have running water in the house! As we leave the chapel after our prayers, we find more pails here and there. At supper I renew my acquaintance with another friend . . . "quinine" and then more bananas.

Recreation is lively. Mother tells us that she was met this morning by a young man who wanted to see a priest. He had brought over in his boat a man who had been baptized a few days ago in danger of death. In spite of

his condition, he wanted to receive Holy Communion and he and his guide had left the village fasting, early this morning.

This reminded a Sister of good news she had heard. "Do you remember we were wondering last week if Leo had received the Last Sacraments before he died? Well, I heard today that a White Father had gone to his village to take Holy Communion to Bertha. He could not find her, but he did find Leo in danger of death and heard his confession. So the old man received the Last Sacraments just before his death. It must have been due to the prayers of someone back home, for had Father found Bertha at once, the chances were he would never have been

told of the poor old man alone in his hut."

As the bell for Night Prayers rings, a girl comes to say a child has been bitten by a snake. Sister Infirmarian, whose day is never done, goes to take care of her. The rest of us retire to the chapel where our day began and lay before Him Who said, "Come to Me all ye who are burdened and I will refresh you," all the care that the day has brought and all its joys, too, all the souls we know in danger and those we do not, all the souls we know have found Him, and all those we know are still far from Him, "lying in darkness and the shadow of death". May He give His Light to all. May His Kingdom come.

### DO YOU KNOW YOUR A, B, C's ?

The following system is used by the little children at Lilongwe, to help them learn the letters of the alphabet:

- a — has only one leg
- i — stands up with a hat on its head
- e — turns its head
- n — is like men, it stands on 2 legs
- u — has a mouth
- w — has three legs, up in the air
- m — also stands, but on 3 legs.

. . . when *m* and *a* get married, we say *ma*; then *i* is born and we call the whole family *ma-i* (which means mother).

The above is an example of how their initiative is used to assist them in learning the letters.



## From AND To THE MISSIONS

After spending a number of years in Mombasa, Kenya, Mother Claire Anne was appointed Superior of our Convent in Metuchen. Though it meant a great sacrifice to leave her direct missionary works with the education of the young African girls, nevertheless, as for all White Sisters kept in the rear guard by God's assignment, the sacrifice finds balm in doing His Holy Will, with equal possibilities of furthering the Missionary cause. Mother Claire Anne (Margaret Gemme) is from Worcester, Mass. and two of her sisters are also White Sisters.

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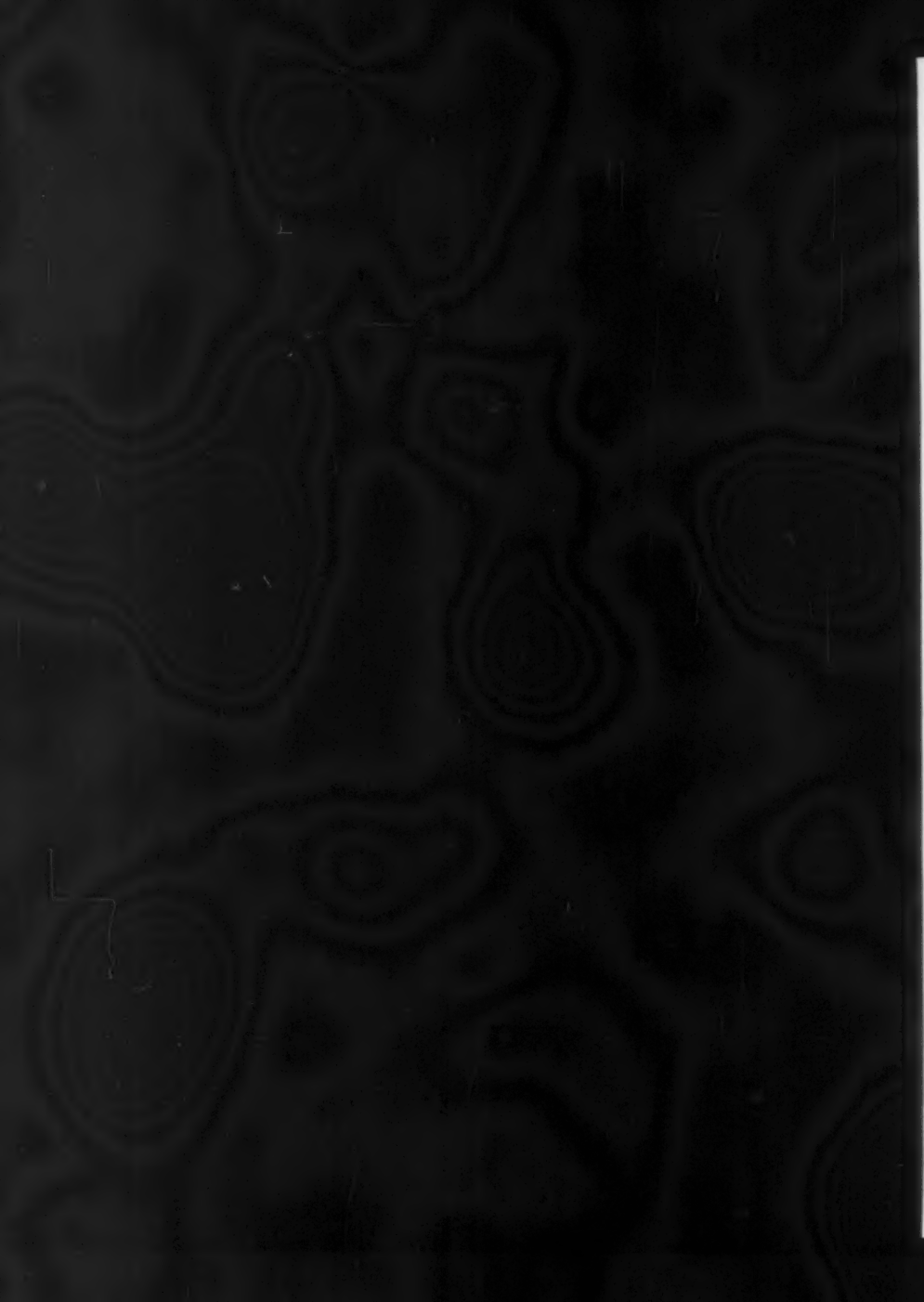
Sister Virginia Marie (Gloria Indelicato) from Everett, Mass., came back from Central Africa with Mother Claire Anne. Sister taught for several years at Trinity College, in Nabbingo, Uganda. She also has a sister in our Congregation.

\*

Sister M. Noelita (Antoinette Strugg) from Detroit, Mich. was very happy to return to the missions. Sister spent five years in the States helping with the many endeavors connected with the Promotional Work Center at Metuchen.









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